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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

15 January 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Photographic Intelligence Center  
SUBJECT : 117L Advisory Committee Report

1. I have read the subject report with great interest, but with even more alarm. I appreciate greatly your making it available to me.

2. My immediate reaction upon reading the conclusions and then the comments in the text of the document is that this committee is acting in terms of our having called for its views on all aspects of the SENTRY program, including types of sensors and even types of vehicles to be used, although I had understood that the committee was supposed to focus its attention on ground readout, processing, and analysis. I might add that I feel that much of the committee discussion is highly unrealistic in that it consists of argumentation that both recovery and "talk-back" reconnaissance satellites should be developed, and that the 6" as well as the 36" camera should be flown, without regard to the necessity for making choices so as to remain within a tight budget.

3. My alarm derives from the extensive discussion in this report of recoverable satellites, all of which is set forth in a tone which implies knowledge by the writer that a recovery satellite program is at least under active consideration, if not already in progress. I am especially disturbed by paragraph IV, sub-paragraph F, which implies that a Thor-boosted reconnaissance satellite is already under development. These references lead me to conclude that the writer of the report knows or surmises the existence of CORONA and, what is even worse, that he is unaware of any improprieties in his discussion which is bound (in my view) to redirect attention to the whole topic of recoverable reconnaissance satellites. I might add a personal guess that the tone and content of the discussion were considerably influenced by one member of the committee, Mr. Amron Katz.

4. My concern over the security implications of this document are so great that I am, in a separate memorandum (copy attached), asking [redacted] to undertake with the utmost urgency an investigation of the

information that has been available to the members of this committee. Since the committee was established by the Air Force, he will of course need the help of appropriate components of the Air Force in this investigation. If it appears that any information concerning CORONA has been improperly disseminated to members of this committee, or that the ARPA or Air Force documents have been improperly classified, I propose to make a formal protest to the competent authorities. I desire your urgent and most complete cooperation in this investigation. I am sure that the first step should be a discussion between [redacted] and yourself. 25X1 Perhaps you will be able to explain the background of the report in such a way as to relieve my extreme concern.

RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.  
DD/P

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